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VIII

THE FAMILY AS A CORPORATE GROUP

1. THE SOLIDARITY OF THE FAMILY

The Sarakatsan family is a corporate group. The property of the family is owned in common. It holds exclusive rights over the productive powers of all its members and the reproductive capacities of its women. And in principle all its members are held to be responsible for the action of any other member. It is true that, in effect, it ceases to exist when the married brothers divide the joint household some 40 years after the marriage which originally brought the family into being. But during this period its members think of it as a permanent entity, and in so far as they consider the future separation of brothers' households they see it at this time as merely a modification of their corporate existence which will be extended in their continued association.

The solidarity of the corporate family is symbolized in the idea of blood (αἷμα). In marriage a man and woman mix their different blood to produce 'one blood' which is the blood of their children. One says of a child, 'he is my blood', (εἶναι αἷμα μου). Relationships in the family are a participation in this common blood. It provides the reason and the sanction within the individual's conscience for the fulfilment of those exigent and uncompromising duties of family membership. The relevance of blood to intelligence and moral character, and their inheritance, is an idea with a long history.[1] But for the Sarakatsani, the blood which children inherit not only represents, but it 'is' the physical and moral attributes that form their social personalities. If a man is not of honourable lineage his blood does not 'take fire' at an insult; and when he is faced with sudden danger 'his blood is cut' (κόπηκε τὸ αἷμα του). These are not metaphorical usages. The blood centred in the heart is both the medium and the agent of emotional thought and feeling. Thus blood is intimately related to courage. And it is a matter of common observation that as a man loses blood,

[1] Onians, op. cit., pp. 48, 121.

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he loses strength. Since courage and physical strength are particularly the qualities that men require in order to defend the reputation of their families, it becomes clear why, for the Sarakatsani, the honour of the family is literally the honour of its blood.

The solidarity of the family group restricts the expression of purely individual feelings, opinions, and personality. This is reflected in the way that individual members are normally described by reference to the father, who until the marriage of his eldest son holds the chief authority. After her marriage a woman is never again addressed by her baptismal name except when she visits the home of her birth. She takes instead the christian name of her husband to which the suffix '-ina' is added; for instance, Periclina (see p. 70, above). In this way there is expressed not only the severance of a woman from her family of origin and her subordination to the authority of her husband, but also the absolute quality of their union. Similarly children of both sexes are known by their own christian name followed by the name of their father in the genitive case, for instance 'John the son of George'. In the eyes of its own members and the outside world, the family is a unity.

Whether we regard Sarakatsan marriage as a solemn contract between two opposed groups, or as a religious sacrament establishing the union of a youth with a maiden, it is certainly a transaction which transcends individual interests and desires. Just as the partners must be spotless (nobility in the boy, virginity in the girl), if the relationships which result from their union are to approach and participate in the qualities and nature of the divine model, so it is clear that either divorce or illegitimacy is incompatible with these values. To be born and to grow up in a complete and legitimate family is a minimal requirement for the honourable establishment of children.

In fact, divorce is permitted in Greece by the Orthodox Church on a number of grounds including adultery. Among the Sarakatsani I discovered only two instances of divorce; but in neither case had the marriage been consummated. In one instance, the father of the bridegroom advised his son not to have intercourse with the bride because she was coughing and expectorating blood. The Sarakatsani are apprehensive of tuberculosis, and after eight days during which the girl's

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But the obligation that Sarakatsani must not on any account fail to fulfil is the defence of family honour. Honour (τιμή) is directly concerned in a limited range of situations; typically these emerge after physical assault or verbal insult, or following a sexual assault on the women of a family, or their own misconduct. Whether or not honour is lost depends essentially upon two qualities in the moral characters of its members; the manliness (ἀνδρισμός) of the men, and the sexual shame (ντροπή) of the women. Objectively, therefore, honour is an aspect of the integrity and social worth of the family as this is judged by the community; subjectively it represents the moral solidarity of the family, an ideal circle that must be defended against any violation by outsiders.

Honour is concerned with strength or prepotency rather than justice. The most direct blow to the strength of another family is simply to kill one of its men. His blood pours out and with it go life, consciousness, and strength. Sarakatsani believe that in some way a killer absorbs the strength from the blood of the man he slays. 'I shall drink your blood' (θὰ σοῦ πιῶ τὸ αἷμα), is a phrase that threatens murder. Given the connexion between strength and honour, it follows that the family of the killer validates its claim to honour, except in circumstances where the motive of the killing is itself dishonourable; such motives of dishonour include sexual lust but not theft. On the other hand, the family of the victim must remain inferior until one of its members 'takes out the blood' (βγάλῃ τὸ αἷμα) from the violator himself, or until he is at least driven into exile. One avenger bathed his hands in the blood of the original killer and returned to show his mother 'the blood of her son'. With certain qualifications that will concern us in a later chapter, all Sarakatsani are born with honour. But it is constantly threatened; and its conservation is, in effect, a struggle to maintain an ideal equality. When a life or the virtue of a woman has been taken away, something equivalent must be taken back if the family is not to fall for ever from grace and social reputation.

The family of the victim, then, have this duty of active solidarity[3] 'to take out the blood' of their kinsman from the

[3] The useful distinction between active and passive solidarity is borrowed from Glotz. See Gustave Glotz, *La Solidarité de la famille dans le droit criminel en Grèce*, Paris, 1904, Chapter 6.

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It is, then, not inconsistent with these considerations that the Sarakatsani have no notions about the blood or spirit of an unavenged victim turning upon the kinsmen who have failed in their duties. For this would be an uncomfortable belief to accommodate where successful vengeance killing is contingent on a number of circumstances. This is interesting because, as we have already seen, blood is the material medium of kinship and its values. In other related contexts Sarakatsani clearly believe that blood has mysterious and intelligent powers. A horse standing outside a house when its master was murdered 'dropped dead from the blood' (ἔσκασε ἀπὸ τὸ αἷμα). A shepherd who killed a woman 'was seized by the blood' (τὸν ἔπιασε τὸ αἷμα). He was paralysed before his victim until the husband returned to kill him. For this was an evil and unnatural deed where supernatural sanctions rightly operated. Sarakatsani will even say that the avenging brother's blood gives him the courage to reclaim 'his own blood' from the killer. But suggestions that a dead man might be personally angry and dangerous if he is not avenged are met with amused and pragmatic disbelief. If care is taken over a man's burial so that the Devil cannot use him as a 'βρυκόλακας' (phantom), a dead man is simply dead. Vengeance, then, is a duty owed to the honour of the family and not to the memory of a particular individual. And honour depends on the strength, confidence, and self-regard of living men, not on any mysterious or spiritual powers.

The problems which the duty of vengeance killing presents to a family sometimes have an element of paradox. For in prosecuting vengeance and defending its honour a family almost inevitably deprives itself of one of its men. This may represent a dangerous weakening of its strength; and strength, it may be remembered, is the basis of honour. In the very act of defending one's honour one may in fact be jeopardizing it. The violator is always in mortal danger immediately after the deed, when grief and humiliation are fresh. But if he survives the first two years unscathed the victim's family begin to consider the situation in a more calculating and unemotional fashion. It then becomes a question rather of whether there are reasonable grounds, of the kind we have discussed, for 'not' prosecuting vengeance. This depends entirely on how the community views their predicament. If all the brothers of the victim are married when the killer returns from prison, the consensus

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562 828 well as the men. They admit that they do not possess the intelligence of men. But they take a certain perverse and compensatory pride in their reputation for cunning and the ability to deceive their men 'forty times each day'. They agree that women are weak, and that the fault in cases of seduction or adultery lies mainly with the girl or the wife. Therefore they accept it as right that, in the first place, retribution should fall on the woman. In customary behaviour this social and moral inferiority is expressed in a number of ways. Women walk behind their men when they are together in public and show them respect. In church the women huddle at the back or line the left-hand wall. Women agree that they are inferior to men in every way, and they continually bemoan their fate that they were not born into the other sex.

562 828 577 [831] Nevertheless, through the possession of shame it is always open to a woman to discipline and redeem her sexuality. The inclinations of her nature, whether conscious or not, make this difficult; but it is the prerequisite of honour. Virginity is a quality which provokes the deepest respect and a sense almost of awe. But the moral dualism of the sexes is finally transcended through the paradox that from women are born the noble sons [554] who will protect the honour of the race. And, as the mother of adult sons whose reputation for manliness is untouched, and as a woman now past the period of her active sexuality, she has almost overcome the moral disabilities of her sex.

* * *

562 156 561 This opposition of the sexes provides the frame for contrasted ideal types of social personality for men and women at each of the three stages of adult life.

884 826 For the unmarried but adult shepherds, the boys (τὰ παιδιά), the pallikaria (τὰ παλληκάρια), physical perfection is an important ideal attribute. A youth ought to be tall, slim, agile, and tough. Ideally, at least, a pallikari is never short in stature. A certain regularity and openness of feature is desirable but without any hint of effeminate fineness. Swarthy complexions and [232] narrowly set eyes are deplored. Any kind of physical deformity is fatal to the reputation of a young shepherd.

884 577 554 But moral qualities are also demanded of the young shepherd, especially courage and strength of purpose. If in addition to

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they are obviously involved in it. But men lie as a matter of habit and principle to deny other people information. And it is one way of expressing their mutual hostility. A head of family who was sincere (ειλικρινής), or without cunning words (ντόμπρος), would be considered foolish and neglectful of his duty.

This is not to say that the Sarakatsani fail to understand the virtues of truth and sincerity; indeed, relations between kinsmen, or between man and God, are based upon them. But between unrelated men the narrow limits of the human condition, particularly envy and poverty, prescribe opposite and meaner values. The essentially 'fallen' character of these relationships is implicit in linguistic usage. Κακός,[4] bad or evil, is sometimes used to indicate a skilful man, especially in operations where cleverness or cunning is required. Πονηρός, which means cunning in the sense of the worker-out of evil, is very frequently used to describe a man like Lambros whose cleverness has to be grudgingly admitted and admired by other men. And, on the other hand, καλός, good, in contexts of character description often refers to a man who is merely weak and irresolute.

But the truly clever man does not give the impression that he is a threat to other men. Except where the interests of his family are critically at stake, he is careful to appear as honourable and well-intentioned towards unrelated men. There are, however, men who practise a small kind of cunning in all their actions. These persons are described as cunning in a sense that is wholly bad. Μάγκας, which means a cunning untrustworthy person, a bearer of mean and untrue scandals, is a word often applied to this kind of man. In the Sarakatsan imagination such a man is small, bent, thin featured, and with narrow close set eyes. The cunning of these men is not the intelligent cleverness of a Lambros, rather it resembles the sexual cunning of women. Both corrupt. The latter corrupts the nobility of men, the former society in general. Cleverness and cunning are legitimate and praiseworthy where their object is the protection or advancement of family interests, but not beyond these limits, or for their own sake.

The heads of families whenever they are free from shepherding

[4] Cf. Höeg, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 168.

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the pallikari, so the fact that she is not yet a wife and mother allows the maiden to cultivate her shame which lies in her seclusion from the outside world and the denial of her sexuality. This is scarcely possible for a married woman. Not only must she submit to her husband's sexual embraces but her practical duties take her to some extent into the world outside her huts.

The maiden's cultivation of her shame demands that her clothes hide her femininity. Her hair is hidden under a black cotton scarf. A girl who by artifice or accident allows her scarf to become frequently undone gains an evil reputation. The only concession to the display of the hair is that girls grow their hair long, plaited into pigtails. The length of these pigtails, often artificially increased, is a point of pride and beauty. Thick, black, homespun blouses and woollen cardigans are buttoned to the neck and the wrists. The breasts are not supported and the shapeless bodice of the blouse effectively prevents the least hint of a provocative contour. A black woollen skirt is worn to the ankles. Generally as many as three thick underskirts are also worn under this. The general impression of the whole costume is one of shapelessness. The shame which is felt at the exposure of the body, even when no other person is present, means that undergarments are not changed for long periods and the body between the neck and the ankles is never washed. In contrast the hair is washed at least once a week, and the face, hands, and feet once or twice each day.

After she reaches the age of sixteen or seventeen a maiden must discipline her movements. No movement even in domestic labour must be hurried. She ought to walk with a slow and deliberate step. In the dance she must not lift her feet more than an inch or two from the ground. A girl who is seen running risks ridicule and a reputation for shamelessness. If, by evil chance, she were to fall backwards 'with her legs in the air' (ἀνάσκελα) she would virtually lose her honour. A girl should be proud but in a sense different from male pride. Thus she ought to be tall with an upright carriage, but with a gaze which is downcast, not level, and an expressive attitude which is directed inwards, not outwards.

A maiden ought to be secluded, as far as this is possible, from the gaze of the outside world. Not only does this guard her name against slander but, if she is unhealthy or ugly, it may

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of Pistiolis provoked the criticism of other families. Women must never show emotion in public except where it is conventionally expected, as at a death. A married daughter meeting her father for the first time after a serious abdominal operation from which he had not been expected to recover, merely said in a matter of fact voice 'How are you, father?' A husband does not kiss his wife publicly even in farewell. Sarakatsan women must never shout in public to each other or their husbands as do the village women. In childbirth extreme fortitude is expected. The woman is given a blanket to bite so that she may not scream; and to guard against the possibility of outsiders hearing her groans the other women laugh and talk and, if necessary, beat tin cans. In general, any lack of self-restraint in conventional behaviour suggests that a woman may also be without self-control in respect to her sexual virtue.

There is no need to elaborate again the behaviour expected of a married woman in her roles within the family, qualities such as devotion, humility, and a readiness to co-operate with other women in the group. Physical strength and robustness, rather than fragile beauty, are the physical characters admired in a wife and mother. Without strength the woman is unlikely to survive for long the immense strain of her labours. Health is a question of deep concern for all Sarakatsani but especially for the married woman. To be sick is inexcusable, unless it is an illness that is easily diagnosed and rapidly curable.

As we have seen in an earlier chapter, the woman, especially the mother, expresses the moral solidarity of the family. Women become terrified when they see their men involved in a fight, moaning aloud in their anxiety and continually crossing themselves. But they are also quick to point the path of duty when men hesitate. The scorn of a wife, mother, or sister, is normally more than most men are able to tolerate. When a man has failed to act honourably a portion of the blame falls to the women of the family who are said to lack the courage to shame their men into the right course of action.

But it is in her family that the community chiefly judges the married woman. She must have sons, but one daughter is also desirable. Her own virtues and deficiences will appear in her children, and upon the manliness of her sons and the shame of

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Fig. 33 Fig. 34

The second /object/ consists of a very long shaft (approximately two meters) ending in a very curved handle. The latter serves to catch by a hind leg the animals that try to move away from the flock. The curve of the handle is calculated in such a way that a foot goes through it easily but with a tight fit. Thus this curve varies according to the kind of animal. It is wider for goats and narrower for ewes. The [826] [804] Sarakatsani use the second joint of the thumb to measure it. It seems that the thickness of this joint corresponds to the size of the feet of the ewes (fig. 34).

236 /46/ Crafts dependent on wool.

Wool is the raw material which the Sarakatsani use almost exclusively to make their clothing, their covers, and rugs. Cotton [777] has been introduced only recently among them in the form of thread which they buy commercially.

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776 777 [782] [789] must then dispose them favorably toward her child. In order to do this she places near it a cup full of sweets and honey, offering it at one and the same time to the fairies and so that "fate in store for it may be sweet"-- a procedure with a double efficacy. According to the report of Madame Hadjimichali, the Sarakatsani the next day look for a black dot on the nose of the child; its position reveals the verdict of the moires. Placed near the forehead, it foretells a happy fate; near the base of the nose it is a sign of ill fortune. (59)

59. Ibid., D.I., p. ٢٤٧

776 [538] The last category of supernatural beings which threaten men are the ogres, fabulous personages, heroes of numerous tales especially meant for children and told in front of the fire during the long winter evenings. (60)

60. Carsten Höeg: Ibid., A. p. 50 f., presents a regular collection of stories of ogres.

We shall not dwell further on these legends which require literary analysis.

751 789 [753] The magic rites that protect against illness aim more at prevention than cure. By enriching the body's potential one avoids "evils." The idea that the Sarakatsani form about the latter is rather confusing, supernatural attack and disease or physiological disorder being very often identified in their thinking. Hence magical intervention must be exerted in connection with particular circumstances in the lives of men and animals--circumstances of "transition" according to the current terminology--without detriment to other interventions on various occasions.

844 751 789 826 845 The moment the child comes into the world its lips are smeared with some drops of blood from the woman who has borne it. If it is born with a caul, the membrane that covers its face is carefully removed by being drawn toward the chin and not toward the forehead, in order to avoid strabismus. The membrane then serves as an amulet. In order to stop the [752] bleeding of the umbilical cord they put on the bleeding end the ashes of a burned bit of the father's cloak.

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754 The evil eye, this baneful influence, which aims to make every effort ineffective, business unprofitable, and to bring sickness and even death to men and animals, is independent of the moral quality, the good [828] or bad character of the one who sets it in motion. Looking upon anything [826] with admiration or envy is enough to bring about the catastrophe. It [782] seems that gray-blue eyes, but also black ones or even non-separated eyebrows are gifted with this power. This very ancient belief (77)

[791] 77. All the peoples of the Orient and the Mediterranean
[113] believe in the evil eye. Their sacred books as well as ancient literature testify to this. On the survival of these beliefs in the folklore of modern Greece see, for example, J. Guthbert-Lawson: Modern Greek Folklore /cited in English/: B. Schmith: Ibid., pp. 574-613.

is so firm that it has gone over into religion; /277/ the Orthodox Church uses a special prayer against the evil eye.

754 The Sarakatsani use the sky-blue ball, as we have seen, as are 789 evocation of the blue eye, (78) as a means of neutralizing it. Sometimes

78. The same idea as that with the wearing of nettles or the carrying of the weight from a fairy's spindle. Imitations of these are sold at fairs and nowadays in shops.

these balls are painted with an iris for a more faithful imitation. A small black spot put behind the ears of children may possibly suffice. (79)

[791] 79. Koukoules: Ibid., E.A. II, p. 242, says that the women of Byzantium smeared the foreheads of children with dirt taken from the public baths.-- Τὸ ΧΡΥΣΟΣΤΟΜΟΣ: M. P. G. 61, 104. He reports also that in Arcadia soot was put behind the child's ear. See also S. Seligmann: Der böse Blick und Verwandtes, vol. II, p. 275.

The cowrie found on amulets, the shape of which resembles that of the eyeball, [827] plays the same role. It is generally advisable to spit three times on an

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121 others--an assumption that is both ontological and operational.
789 A governing idea comes to light behind these postulates and serves
153 as their foundation: a desired result can be obtained if man, the livestock and their lives are brought into relationship with an appropriate agent--the source of a favorable influence. The magic operation thus involves two componepts that are placed in association.

Which leads to a new question: How is this association brought about? Two more postulates furnish the solution:

1. Contact. The components of the magic action are placed either in direct contact or in mediated contact. In the second instance one of the elements of the action--and at that moment it is a matter of a cosmic force or a qualitative reality, hence arbitrary--is represented by a symbol or a sign serving as mediator.

It is interesting to note that often an object is chosen as a symbol which itself has a relationship, obviously assumed, with the force it represents, so that the latter will have transmitted to that object some of its properties. Thus the symbol in question has a double efficacy. It becomes a means of contact both indirect (as a symbol) and direct (because of the properties which have been transmitted to it.) That is the
826 case, for example, with the blood of the woman in childbirth on the lips of
844 the child, it symbolizes the creative forces and at the same time has properties of its own since it has already been in contact with the creative forces. In this case we may speak of a mixed contact.

/289/ 2. Representation. The association is sometimes brought about by simple representation. Instead of being brought about materially, the contact is represented. This is the equivalent if not the corollary of the postulate of the representation of situations, but the two things must not be confused. In the postulate, the representation produces the final effect. When the representation is a means of association, the contact is simply imitated without going further.